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OFFICE OF THE MAYOR  
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**MEDIA CONTACT:** [pressoffice@cityhall.nyc.gov](mailto:pressoffice@cityhall.nyc.gov), (212) 788-2958

**TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO HOLDS MEDIA AVAILABILITY**

**Mayor Bill de Blasio:** Well, good morning, everybody. You know, throughout this fight against COVID-19, over these months, New York City has proven what can happen, what people can do when they get together and show the strengths, show the discipline, show the resiliency for which New York City's been famous for a long time, and is once again famous throughout this country for what people have done here. But one of the things that has worked is not only relying on the strength of New Yorkers, but looking at what's happening around the world and learning lessons, looking at what works and emulating it – in many cases, going even farther. We have leaned on science. We've leaned on data. We've leaned on research. We believe those things matter here in New York City, and that's been the basis of our strategy and it's worked. And it is that willingness to learn, to learn from both the mistakes and the smart moves made elsewhere – that has been an underpinning of everything that we've done here. And to be creative, to recognize that we can make adjustments, we can change course when it makes sense and be willing to try things that we think will move us forward. You're going to see that creativity and that ability to constantly make adjustments and improvements. As we approach the beginning of our school year.

Now, I want to talk about the approach we've taken and the focus on health and safety. Look, I want to speak not only as your mayor, but as a parent. I'm going to speak to my fellow parents – the focus has been on health and safety. This is what we think about every single day. This is what we work on every single day. I know the Chancellor feels that just as deeply as I do. And, obviously, we want to protect our educators and our staff as well. We have the strictest, safest approach to school reopening anywhere in the country. We have held the highest standards. And we've looked all over the world. In fact, the standards for reopening New York City public schools are amongst the strongest in the entire world. I'm going to go into some of the details today so that you get that perspective on just how much we have done, just how far we're going to make sure that our schools are safe.

Now, we've looked at what has worked in a variety of countries, and we've created a new gold standard here in New York City, literally taking the best ideas from each country in the world and combining them into one strategy for safety and health for all. So, let's give you a sense of some of what we've seen around the world and how New York City matches up.

First of all, I made clear, we have a three-percent test threshold – in other words, if more than three percent of New Yorkers are testing positive over a seven-day period, we don't open schools; or, schools that are already in session, we closed the schools if we reached that level. Now, we've been nowhere near that three percent threshold for months now, and that's great

news. But I want you to understand, that three percent threshold is the toughest in the world. The World Health Organization advises a five percent threshold, as does the State of New York. We've gone even farther with three percent as our standard. Masks – we're requiring masks, face coverings for all adults, all children in the school building – that is one of the strictest standards in the world, stricter than the World Health Organization; the same standard held in Japan and South Korea. With testing, we've made it available for free for all New Yorkers. We've encouraged all school staff, all educators to get that free testing and students as well. That free testing being available and encouraged for all surpasses most nations in Europe. We have a fully developed contact tracing system for our schools, all ready, in place, and ready to go – a vast contact tracing apparatus directly focused on our schools, that matches some of the best practices we've seen in Japan and Germany. And today, we're going to be talking about something really wonderful, a new option for outdoor learning, which matches the success we've seen in Italy, Denmark and Norway. When you take all these pieces together, there's no place that's combining these elements as strongly as we are. And that's why we believe we have one of the best standards in the entire world to make sure everyone is safe.

Now, let's talk about something that is a great example of the creativity and the adjustments we want to make. And I want to say, parents have asked about it, educators have asked about it – what can we do outdoors? So, today, we announce a new outdoor learning plan – a new outdoor learning plan that's going to open up a lot of wonderful possibilities for our kids and for our educators. So, we heard those voices that said, could we do something different under these circumstances? The answer is yes. And this will apply to our public schools, our charter schools, private religious schools, learning bridge schools, you name it – one standard for all. Now, we know outdoors is one of the things that we know works. Being outdoors – it's great to be outdoors, in general, but we also know that the disease doesn't spread the same outdoors. We've seen that over and over. So, we want to give schools the option to do as much outdoors as they can. And, look, today – starting today, we empower our principals to determine the maximum amount they can do outdoors. It's up to them to figure out how to use school yards and anything on school property that's outdoors, but we're going to go farther. The Department of Education is going to work with principals to open up more space if that's what they want, if that's what they think will work for their school community. In certain cases, we can close off streets for a period of time. In certain cases, we can make space available in local parks. It really depends on the circumstance of each school. But one thing we know for sure, we're going to focus on the 27 neighborhoods, hardest hit by COVID-19. We're going to prioritize, making sure that they get options for outdoor space. Those neighborhoods have suffered so much. We owe it to them to make sure they get every possible advantage, going forward. So, they'll be the first priority for outdoor space. We're also going to focus on schools that don't happen to have their own outdoor space and look for good options for them.

So, we heard the voices of folks who called for this change. We're acting on it, we're acting on it quickly. Look, I'll remind everyone. We never know what the weather brings and that's why outdoor learning – I've said it before – is not a perfect solution and it won't work every day, but it will certainly add a lot of flexibility to what we're doing and a great alternative for many schools. And here to talk about this new outdoor learning plan and someone who's shown creativity, flexibility, persistence throughout – our Chancellor Richard Carranza.

**Schools Chancellor Richard Carranza:** Thank you, Mr. Mayor. This is exciting. You and I both know how seriously we take the safety of all of our students and our staff and the scorecard that you spoke about really illuminates that commitment that we have to the health and safety of all our students and our employees. As we get closer to reopening, we continue to implement our plans, all the while, keeping health and safety front and center. I'm excited about outdoor learning as a supplement to the school day. Before COVID, as a teacher and a school leader, I always knew how important it was for my scholars to get some time outdoors. And now, in partnership with our sister agencies, that will be possible for more schools, even if a school doesn't have a yard. Now, this is really important – in partnership with our sister agencies. We all wear the same uniform in service of the citizens of New York City. So, we will work closely to make sure that we facilitate and make this as non-bureaucratic as possible. Not only do we know that the virus spreads less easily outdoors, but we know our students need time to run and play and explore and create – and that happens outdoors. We will be able to maintain the vibrancy and the richness of the school and school experience while maintaining physical distancing thanks to this initiative of outdoor learning. Thank you, Mr. Mayor.

**Mayor:** Thank you very much, Chancellor. And Chancellor, I liked everything you said. I particularly like the part about not being bureaucratic. And this Chancellor's someone who cuts through the bureaucracy and makes things happen all the time. So, a message to all principals – if you want to do some good, creative things, outdoor learning, you're going to get fast support from the Department of Education and City agencies to make that happen right away. And again, want everyone to look at this great global scorecard we put together, give you a sense of how New York City has taken the best ideas from around the world, putting them together so that we can have the safest and healthiest schools for our kids, starting next month.

Now, we have been able to keep moving forward in this city. We're talking about schools and all the areas of our economy that have been opening up. We're talking about a lot of progress. Why? Because we've been able to beat back to the disease. We've been able to keep that rate of infection below three percent consistently since June, because of your hard work. This is everybody in it together and it has had a huge impact. And I want to emphasize, when we talk about countries around the world, very few countries had the kind of low infection rate New York City has now when they reopened their schools. Very few had this low a level of transmission of disease, but they still successfully reopened their schools. So, that's something that we can take some inspiration from, and obviously know that we have to stick with what's working and what we're doing so well – the wearing masks, which has proven to be incredibly helpful and effective, observing the social distancing, and, of course, regularly getting tested.

Now, here's something real interesting, and it's going to be a little curve ball. If you know me and how I feel about the sport – I love baseball. You're going to see baseball and testing come together here, because a team that sometimes I've had some differences with because I grew up rooting for another team – well, today I'm a Yankees fan, because they're doing something great to help us fight COVID-19. And I really want to thank the entire Yankees organization for stepping up. The Yankees have offered to get front and center and the effort to encourage people to get tested. And we're going to show you a public service announcement, just a moment, but what's great is there will be a special promotion for Get Tested Tuesday – again, every week we want to encourage people haven't gotten tested, or haven't been tested a long time, get out there

and get tested. It's free. It's easy. It's quick. Get tested Tuesday is the day to do it. And on this Tuesday, tomorrow, August 25th, there's a special Yankees gear giveaway. The first 4,000 people who get tested at Health + Hospitals sites at our public hospital and clinic sites. The first 4,000 we'll get free Yankees gear. Let's show you about this – what this great promotion is all about –

[Yankees video plays in background]

Alright. A great message from the Yankees. I want to thank everyone at the Yankees who participated in that video. And I have a line here that was written for me. It's one of the cheesiest lines you've heard in a long time, but together – it says here – now, because of the coronavirus, we are all on the same team. So, whether you're a Mets fan, a Yankees fan, or a fan of another team, get out there and get tested on Get Tested Tuesday.

All right, let's go over our indicators. Number one, daily number of people admitted to New York City hospitals for suspected COVID-19, threshold 200 patients – today's report, 66, with a confirmed positivity rate of just a 5.8 percent. Number two, new reported cases, seven-day average, threshold 550 cases – today's report, 239. And number three, percentage of people testing positive citywide for COVID-19, threshold percent – today's report, 2.05 percent. Okay, let me do a few words in Spanish.

[Mayor de Blasio speaks in Spanish]

With that, let's turn to our colleagues in the media and please let me know the name and outlet of each journalist.

**Moderator:** Hi, all. We will now begin our Q-and-A. As a reminder, we're joined today by Schools Chancellor Richard Carranza, Health Commissioner Dr. Dave Chokshi, and Senior Advisor Jay Varma. First up, we're going to have Juliet from 1010 WINS.

**Question:** Good morning, Mr. Mayor. How are you today?

**Mayor:** Good, Juliet. How was your weekend?

**Question:** Oh, very good. Thank you. Thank you. So, my question – my first question regarding your school announcement on the outdoor activity, what's the security? How will this be secured? Will it be NYPD? School safety agents? How will that be handled and will there be limitations on where this can take place in order for them to be – to have security?

**Mayor:** Yeah. Great question, Juliette. I'll start and the Chancellor can add. Juliet, first of all, it's up to age principal and, you know, they work closely with our whole school community to determine what they want to do. In some cases, they may say, you know what, we're good with just what we have in the school – we have a courtyard, we have a school yard, we can work with that. If they want to close off a street, for example, during part of the school day, that will depend of course, on what kind of streets are around them, if they're the kind of streets that can be closed off – for example – they're not a bus route, for example. In that case, it will be working with

department transportation. If there's some support needed, of course, school safety is always there. If NYPD is needed at times, but I don't think typically it will be NYPD. I think it will be DOT and school safety, working out what makes sense. And Parks – if they choose an area in a park, of course, Parks Department will work with them as well.

**Chancellor Carranza:** All I would add, Mr. Mayor, is that part of why there's a process for schools to submit is that we have our sister agencies, some of whom you've already mentioned DOT, NYPD, DSNY, FDNY, Parks – all of us working together to make sure that when the plan is submitted, that all of those details are accounted for, because, first and foremost, we want to make sure that our students and staff are safe and secure. But we also are encouraging you know, our schools to think of different kinds of places. You mentioned public parks, adjacent streets, all of those are fair. So, we look forward to receiving those requests.

**Mayor:** Go ahead, Juliet.

**Question:** Okay. Sure. Thank you. So different topic, I've been receiving complaints about a large homeless encampment in Elmhurst, Queens affecting small business owners there. There have been 49 complaints, 3-1-1 since April. 3-1-1 has been directed to the local precinct, but the precinct says they don't have their homeless units to respond to anymore. So why is 3-1-1 still routing the calls to the precinct and how can there be a more effective response to this continuing encampment problem?

**Mayor:** Okay. First of all, Juliet, you and I have talked about this before. I just want to say once in a while we still see something that's an encampment. That means people trying to set up basically, you know, permanent lodging on the street. But it's very, very rare in New York City now because we made a decision years ago in this administration to stop what had happened for decades before and not allow those encampments. Sometimes you see what we call a hotspot, which is people congregating, but not having set up, you know, a living place in effect. Whatever it is in Elmhurst, we're going to go deal with it either way. 3-1-1 should be able to take the complaint and make sure it is effectively addressed. I'm going to find out what's going on with that to begin with. This issue will be addressed right away in Elmhurst. But to be clear about NYPD, I have had this conversation with Commissioner Shea. NYPD absolutely continues to participate on a precinct level. There was a more dedicated homeless outreach unit. That's what got changed, but precincts still have to get involved when other agencies need their help. If a Homeless Services can take care of something or Sanitation if there's trash that needs to be picked up or, or any area where there's stuff left behind? Great. But if they need NYPD involved that is done at a precinct level, and that continues.

**Moderator:** Next up, we have Shant from the Daily News. Yeah. Good morning, Mr. Mayor and Chancellor, I wanted to ask regarding the outdoor learning plan, is the City going to devote any funding to this? And I guess what I'm wondering is how will you make sure that schools with wealthy PTAs that can buy tents and supplies and what have you won't get an unfair advantage here? Thanks.

**Mayor:** Great question, Shant. I appreciate that a lot, because this is an area that we thought about and I'm going to turn to the Chancellor with simply this introduction, that one, a lot of

what you'd need to do, we really won't cost much at all, can be done pretty easily right around the school itself. But if there are additional costs we're going to be supportive in every way we can, but we welcome PTAs that want to chip in. But we want to make sure it's done fairly. So Chancellor, why don't you talk about that vision?

**Chancellor Carranza:** So, the interagency, sister agency working group that I've referenced now, several times is critical to this. We're leveraging each other's resources to be able to approve the plans and then support schools that make this decision. But I really appreciate the question that's predicated on equity. We do know already that there are PTAs that have been fundraising for tents and other kinds of supplies for their schools. Look, we are in the midst of a global pandemic. If there's any time for all of us to come together and help each other, this is the time. So I'm asking that if a PTA has done their fundraising and they've raised more than enough for their school let's identify another school that doesn't have that fundraising capacity. Let's help them out too. Because they are our students as well. And if you don't know what schools those are, we'd be happy in the Department of Education to help identify. We've already identified some of the spots in our city that had been most impacted by the coronavirus. So again, we have lots of data to help with that. But I'm encouraging PTAs, let's help each other. Let's help a sister school as you do what you're doing for your school as well.

**Mayor:** Go ahead, Shant.

**Question:** Yeah, I was wondering if when you said, you know, well, if there are additional costs, we'll be supportive any way we can. Can you put a dollar amount, even if it's just an estimate on that? And also, can you and Chancellor Carranza speak to the timing? I mean the school year is obviously starting next month. How will principals and the DOE have enough time, you know, to figure out that they want to participate, let alone take all the steps necessary to set up things outdoors, if needed?

**Mayor:** Shant, on the first point again, I don't think the costs are particularly extensive. If you're talking about and schools have done this for a variety of needs previously. Sometimes they close off in adjacent street, it's not an unheard of thing. It's pretty simple. And obviously schools use nearby parks for different field trips and all. Whatever it takes in terms of personnel helping them out, I think we can do that in a smart way. But in terms of timing again, principals have a lot of experience with different types of outdoor activities. This is not something mysterious to them. They're very resourceful. I think they'll be able to do a lot and some of it for the very beginning of school, some of it they might phase in as they go along. Chancellor?

**Chancellor Carranza:** I would only add sir, that principals have already been looking to identify outdoor space. It was part of their initial survey of their schools with the square footage. So many principals have already identified space that they're using. This just opens many more opportunities and options for school communities as well. What's important is that we aim to have -- we would like principals to submit their requests by Friday, August 28th. All of those requests that are submitted by Friday, August 28th, we will have decisions back to them by September 4th, Friday, September 4th. Which is a one week turn around. It'll probably be much quicker than that. And again, what we're really looking for is health and safety to make sure they're feasible plans that can be implemented. And we'll keep students and staff safe.

**Moderator:** Next up we have Brigid from WNYC.

**Question:** Good morning, Mr. Mayor. This outdoor education plan seems really intriguing, but it is another thing for schools to plan for. So, kind of similar to Shant's question, you know, there are principals who've come out in recent days saying they're not ready and it's about three weeks from the start of school. And parents really need the plan. Is there any chance there's going to be a delay and do you see a benefit in letting parents know sooner rather than later, if school is going to be pushed back?

**Mayor:** Brigid right now, you know, we've been really clear about our start date. It's the one that's been on the calendar for a long time. We are doing a lot of work to get ready and, you know, and the ramp up to any school year, a lot happens in the final weeks. This time the work has been happening over months. So, I feel confident that principals are doing a great job. We expect to give them a lot more information in the next few days to fill in the blanks and get moving. We expect schools be communicating with their parents throughout this week in terms of the schedules. So, I think the pieces are coming together. Go ahead.

**Question:** And Mr. Mayor, you've appeared with several of your top commissioners during this crisis and deputy mayors, but we haven't seen any of First Deputy Mayor Dean Fuleihan. And I was just wondering where he is?

**Mayor:** He's about 15 feet away right now in his office. We could get him to come in and wave. Dean Fuleihan has been doing absolutely outstanding work. And as you know, Brigid, like so many First Deputy Mayors, the work they do is first and foremost directed within the administration and working with all the agencies. But Dean has really been leading so much of the work with the Chancellor to get ready for school. And he has been involved multiple hours per day on that in addition to many other things he does on budget and policing, some of the other issues. So, we'll be happy to bring him out for a guest appearance, but he is doing a hell of a lot of good work as we speak.

**Moderator:** Next up, we have Rich Lamb from WCBS Radio.

**Question:** Morning, Mr. Mayor.

**Mayor:** Hey Rich, how are you doing?

**Question:** I'm doing okay. So, looking at the most recent shooting numbers over the weekend and I guess there were 45 shootings, I think eight fatalities, have you had any second thoughts about the dissolution of the anti-crime unit? Does that go through your mind at all?

**Mayor:** No Rich, I appreciate the question. I'll tell you, I've had this conversation with a Commissioner Shea. I've also had it with community leaders and elected officials. And the more I've heard, the more it confirms that Commissioner Shea made the right decision. That the problem was both the reality on the ground, the relationship between police and community. This was not a helpful reality, just the way that that unit had evolved over time. It doesn't mean they

didn't do good work. They did in fact, a lot of good work and a lot of good people in that unit. But Commissioner Shea felt strongly, there was a better way to do this work that would achieve the goal of getting guns off the street more effectively in a more lasting manner, but also help to address the relationship between police and community. Which is really the underpinning of everything we need to do on safety. So, I think it was the right decision.

**Question:** Okay. So this is kind of a comprehensive question here. So, given what you call the perfect storm, you know, the shootings, the demonstrations –

**Mayor:** The pandemic, don't forget that.

**Question:** COVID, the budget disaster. Was there ever a moment when you put your head in your hands in the middle of the night and said, why did I want this job?

**Mayor:** I would be lying to you if I said there was never such a moment. I think, and many people have said to me, in fact, proactively that they would not trade. It's very interesting when people come up to you and tell you proactively, they don't want your job. It's been an extraordinarily tough time, obviously. And the way Rich, as you said, just one crisis layered upon another, no one could ever have predicted anything like this. But you know what? It's natural, it's human to have those moments. You're like, why on Earth is this happening? Why is it happening to any of us? But then you move forward. And I have to tell you the worst moments, Rich were when sort of all the crises came together, the worst moments were in the beginning of April. When it looked like our hospital system would just not be able to hold out. And it's amazing what our health care heroes did and how they held the line. That was really the decisive moment, that first week in April. So that was the toughest time, even tougher than when we had, you know, more and more crises on top of that. But it really comes down to just believing we're going to get through it. Believing in New Yorkers, which I do deeply. And remembering that no place bounces back like New York City. It's been proven time and time again.

**Moderator:** Next up we have Katie from the Wall Street Journal.

**Question:** Hey, good morning, everybody. My question is for – my first question is for Chancellor Carranza. Which percentage of the public schools here in the city are ready for students and staff to enter from a ventilation and air quality standpoint? I know you said those details were coming, but I was curious if you have them.

**Chancellor Carranza:** Yeah. So, we're still working through those details. They're active. I would say inspections that are happening. So we're compiling all of that data. Obviously, when you think about how many windows there are in 1,800 schools you're talking hundreds upon hundreds of thousands of windows. So, to make that comprehensible, put it in one place and as a Mayor has mentioned, we want to make sure that schools also have a school by school report as well. So that will be forthcoming very quickly. What I can say is that as I've visited schools, I'm very impressed with the work that our custodial engineers are doing, that our teachers are doing. There are teachers already in setting up classrooms. So there's a lot of work that's happening on the ground.



**Question:** Thank you. My second question is for you, Mr. Mayor. I know that the financial situation of the City has been better to put it lightly and without federal help or State borrowing authority, layoff notices for up to 22,000 workers could go out by August 31st. So I'm curious, this is I guess, more of an ethereal question. How do you think New Yorkers – there's all this debate over whether New York is dead or alive. No, it's not. It's great. It's not great. How can New Yorkers help? What can an actual regular, everyday New Yorker do to perhaps fill the gaps missing with these budget cuts and put more pressure on the State and the feds? If there's anything we can do.

**Mayor:** Yeah, there is. It's a great question. And of course, there's something people can do. First of all, the biggest thing that we need all New Yorkers to do, they're by and large doing, which is to help us fight back the disease. That really is the beginning and the end of this discussion. If we continue to lower the infection rate, everything else is possible. So, you know, I think anyone who says, what can I do should be thinking about how regularly they put that face covering on, how regularly they socially distance, you know the basics go a long, long way. Help us make sure that folks who travel in, know about the quarantine rules. There's lots of different things people can do. The census, by the way, don't forget that. Anyone who has not yet participated in the census. We need that. Every single New Yorker can do that, tremendously important to the future of the city. But in terms of the budget, yeah, definitely. Let your federal leaders know how important it is to get the stimulus. That would be the best way to address our financial reality and avert the layoffs. But the second-best way is an Albany. And so to every New Yorker who wants to stop those layoffs, let your State Senator know, let your State Assembly member know. They have to pass the legislation to give us long term borrowing. Let them hear from their constituents that we want to avert layoffs at all costs. That we want to keep City services going. So that's definitely something every New Yorker can do. Reach out to the Legislature, let them know how much you care about it.

**Moderator:** Next up we have Steve from Westwood One News.

**Mayor:** Did we have a problem the other day with Steve as well? Steve, we got to get you some better technology brother.

**Moderator:** We're having some technical difficulties. We'll go back to Steve. We're now going to go to Gloria from NY1.

**Question:** Thank you. Good morning.

**Mayor:** Hey, how are you doing?

**Question:** Hey, good morning, Mr. Mayor.

**Mayor:** How's it going?

**Question:** Good. How are you?

**Mayor:** Good.

**Question:** I want to ask about this plan that you're rolling out today. It sounds like you spent the first portion of the announcement, reassuring teachers and students and parents about how good the standards are for going back to school here in New York. But it also sounds like now you are looking once again to principals to come up with yet another plan on their own with just weeks to go before schools actually open up. When does the City actually step in and say, this is how we're going to do it, this is how we're going to pay for it, this is what it's going to look like - instead of looking back to the educators for them to set it up themselves?

**Mayor:** Well, I respect the question, but I would argue and I'm going to let a former principal speak here, I don't think principals see it that way. I, again, we respect labor unions and the advocacy they provide for their members. But I've talked to a lot of principals directly. I know the Chancellor talks to principals all the time. They are the captains of their ship and they want to make these decisions, I assure you. It's not a burden to be given more options. We've said we'll support them in it. Some principals may have a very expansive vision of outdoors. Some may not. It's really their decision. We're not going to mandate it to them, and as we've said, they have to have a fall back anyway, because the weather is always the x factor. Richard?

**Chancellor Carranza:** Thank you, Mr. Mayor. Gloria, I would just remind everyone what I said earlier that as principals have been submitting their building utilization plans there are a number of principals that have already identified outdoor learning is one of those options. They haven't been denied that. This gives principals more options as principals are talking to and meeting with their school communities. I received many emails from principals that have said my community would like to know if we can shut this street down or if we could set up tents in the park, all of that has gone into really supporting what principals have been asking us for. So, it's not like no one has thought about this and surprise, now you can have outdoor learning. Principals have been asking for this. Now that being said, I think I don't want to bury the lead here. What's really important about this announcement is that we, our sister agencies and the Department of Education are taking on the bureaucracy to streamline the approval process. That I think if you ask anybody, especially a principal will say, "hey, if you can get all of the obstacles out of my way, I have a good idea, my community supports that idea, just get the obstacles out of my way," I think they would tell you that is a huge benefit, not an imposition on their time.

**Moderator:** Next up we have Yoav from The City – sorry, continue your second question.

**Mayor:** Sorry about that, Gloria, go ahead.

**Question:** Thank you. I want to ask about another part of the overall school plan that we haven't gotten an update on yet, and that is childcare. Obviously, with parents needing to go back to work, trying to decide if they, their children can do in-school instruction or if they have to go fully remote, what is the status of that plan? What is the status of how many seats will be available and when can parents expect to hear from the city as they try to get ready for the school year?

**Mayor:** Yeah, we're going to have more to say in just the next couple of days on a childcare. Status is still a hundred thousand seats will be available for free. I want to say that again, a hundred thousand childcare seats for free. The fact is this week, you're going to see families getting their schedules for their kids, and that's going to tell families, obviously the last piece information they need to figure out what they need in terms of childcare. I would remind you, and it's a sad reality, Gloria, a lot of folks are at home, whether they want to or not. There's a lot of folks at home because tragically they're unemployed. There's a lot of folks at home because their workplaces are doing all their work remotely, but there's clearly parents who absolutely need that childcare. So our goal is to make sure it is prioritized for the families that need it the most, the folks who do have to go into work, are not working remotely, and really need that support. We'll be talking about that application process in the next few days.

**Moderator:** Now we'll go to Yoav from The City.

**Mayor:** [Inaudible]

**Moderator:** We're going to go to –

**Question:** Hi, good morning.

**Mayor:** Go ahead, hey Yoav.

**Question:** Hi. I just wanted to ask earlier this year you appointed Charles, I'm not sure how to pronounce his last name [inaudible] perhaps, to the EDC board, and this gentleman was a major campaign donor to your presidential campaign. His firm secured an emergency contract of more than \$90 million for ventilators and PPE at the beginning of the crisis. I believe the bulk of that was canceled because they failed to deliver, but I'm just wondering how you know him and, and why you chose to appoint him to the EDC?

**Mayor:** Yeah, known him for years, prominent community leader. He's done really good work in the community and I have a lot of respect for him and he's also a successful business person. In terms of the emergency supplies we wanted everyone who could help us get involved, I don't know that last piece that you said about how much work he did or why it went to a certain level. I don't know the facts about that. I do know that everyone who came forward and said they could help get us PPE were put into the same exact process because we needed the help desperately. You will remember that we were at a point where we were just down to a few days supply and we needed everyone to help who could help. Go ahead.

**Question:** Okay. Thank you. On a different issue I want to ask about some of the industries that feel like they're in a state of limbo right now, because there's no timeline, the City is giving them no timeline for when they can reopen, and the City has set no metrics to meet, you know, that would trigger these industries to reopen. This includes indoor dining at restaurants, dance and yoga studios and a few other sectors, and I guess I'm just wondering, you know, for these small business owners who are kind of hanging on by a thread here, what can you do to give them any sense of when and how they can reopen because they can't continue like this indefinitely and they've been given no timeline for when they can reopen?

**Mayor:** Look, obviously the most important thing to say off is I really do feel for them, and I've never for a moment felt anything but sympathy that these folks have built these businesses, often family businesses, that took immense hard work are suffering so much right now. That's why, you know, from the very beginning, the City and State, and we've talked about the dining establishments, we made sure that takeout and delivery kept going. We came up with the plan for outdoor dining and threw a lot into it to make it work and create tremendous flexibility. We're going to start that again next year. So they can count on that. But you know, Dr. Chokshi, Dr. Varma are both here, they will tell you that unfortunately, indoor dining, bars, restaurants, nightclubs have been the nexus for so many of the problems around the world, including some of the resurgence that you're seeing in Europe and in Hong Kong right now.

So we don't have a specific timeline because there's such sensitivity around that sector. We're going to keep looking. We're going to keep looking at what it would take to feel that we could do that again. And I'm going to keep hoping and praying that the vaccine comes real soon, and hopefully that's a matter of months, but we don't have a sharp, clear line yet, Yoav, because of the challenges that come with that industry, we'll look at the dance and yoga again. But everything we're looking at is with the perspective of health and safety first and keeping our infection rate low.

**Moderator:** For our last question, we're going to go back to Steve from Westwood One News.

**Question:** Hello, Mr. Mayor. I hope you can hear me now.

**Mayor:** How are you doing Steve?

**Question:** I'm doing well, and that's as a native New Yorker. I want to say I've showed that perseverance pays off and I hope people take that to heart.

**Mayor:** You're an example to us all, Steve.

**Question:** Thank you very much. I do want to revisit a topic that has been touched upon here today and in the last few days in your briefings, you know, there's, so-called "Exodus of New Yorkers" and that's specifically upper middle-class New Yorkers, and these record number of apartment vacancies around the city. You know, the other day you said that people will always want to be in New York, but the folks who are leaving are taking a significant amount of wealth with them at a time when New York needs every penny of tax revenue and consumer dollars, and those folks seem to be reacting to this idea that New York is in a death spiral and they say the things that normally keep them here no longer available to them, so why should they stay? I guess what I want to ask you is what's your plan to stem this tide, to appeal to New Yorkers this sense of civic responsibility, to take ownership of their neighborhoods, because you know, complaining louder about weeds not getting cut and trash piling up, isn't going to change the reality of the fiscal situation in the city?

**Mayor:** Steve, look, I will harken to a conversation I had just yesterday with a someone who's been very successful in real estate and is a proud New Yorker. And, you know, what he said to

me was unquestionably, the City is coming back and anyone doesn't understand that isn't paying a lot of attention, that we have such strengths that, you know, the vast majority of people who were here in February are still here. Relatively few people went anywhere. A lot of those people will be back. Some people may decide that they want to go somewhere else for a period of time, and as the situation in New York City improves, they'll come back. Some people may not, and I guarantee you there'll be replaced by others who bring a lot of creativity and talent. People have wanted to come to New York City for generations. That's not changing.

So, I don't understand honestly, how any New Yorker can participate in the discussion about these fears about the future of New York City. I don't mind having fear. I don't mind having questions, but if you don't think New York City is coming back, then you don't know New York City. And it's just to me really counterproductive when people talk about what's wrong when there are so many things right, including the fact that this city is now the envy of the nation in the way it fought back from this disease, and I think it's not accidental. It's about who New Yorkers are and how strong the people of this city are. So, of course, we'll be back. If folks miss the theater, if they miss, you know, the indoor dining, those things will be back, they'll be back next year at some point, I think that is overwhelmingly the case.

So, I think we're going to make a strong comeback. I think there'll be people who see opportunity that in a new reality, they're going to build something. There's going to be people who come in and say, I want to be part of the rebuilding. So, I have a lot of confidence in the future of this city. Go ahead, Steve.

**Question:** Yeah, and to follow up on that, I think anyone who has ever written New York's obituary has been proven wrong in the long-term – and there've been many people who've done that over the decades, but you know, I'm seeing a lot of City Council members, for instance, now going to their constituents and saying, listen, it's going to be a rough road ahead for a long time, we need to take ownership of our community and they're sponsoring park cleanups and asking businesses to take ownership of their curbs and clean the curbs and that sort of thing. I'm just wondering, you know, where's that messaging from the city as a whole? I know you've got a lot on your plate right now, nobody denies that. But I think, you know, to draw upon that strength that New Yorkers have, which has always – you know, we can persevere, we've come back from so much adversity from the 70s on through today, time after time. I'm just wondering what's the plan to get New Yorkers, to take ownership of their neighborhoods and fill the void where the City agencies aren't able to provide the services that they were able to prior to coronavirus.

**Mayor:** Well, I think that's a really good point, Steve. I was actually out in Southeast Queens on Saturday and talked to the Council Member there, Daneek Miller, who in fact had just come from a neighborhood cleanup, he talked about exactly what you're talking about, how many neighborhood people are coming forward, they understand it's a tough time, they're pitching in. So, absolutely, we're seeing this all over the city, just like in the beginning of this crisis, we saw people come out in droves to help our healthcare heroes, to applaud them, to bring them food – New Yorkers do this. I think you're right, that the more we can make it a call to arms and a message the better off we'll be, and you're also right, I've got a lot on my plate. So I think what's fair to say is these last months, the focus has been on beating back this disease and getting ready for school and continuing to reopen the economy.

I think when we get into the fall, that's exactly the right time to really talk about the future of the city, the bigger vision for our economy and for our people, the bigger vision of how people show that kind of ownership and what we need to do – what everyone needs to do to bring the city back. So you are right, and I'd say the timing is that's something that you're going to start to see as early as September.

Everybody, what a good segue to conclusion here to say we know. We know that New Yorkers are undaunted. I really appreciate what Steve said about the folks who have written the obituary of New York City in the past, they've been proven wrong many time, they'll be proven wrong again. New Yorkers don't give up, and as we get ready for the fall, as we get ready to open our schools up and embrace our children after everything they've been through, we remember why we do what we do because we have a love in this city. There's a compassion in this city. There's a caring for each other, and particularly for our kids, and we are going to do a lot of hard work to help our children move forward. And I said this a long time ago, when we started Pre-K for All, kids can tell, kids are really perceptive – they can tell when you care about them; they can tell when you're going the extra mile for them; they can tell when you're investing something in them. We are going to invest in our children this fall and our future. And I'll finish with the simple, beautiful message that Richard and I heard a few days ago in Crown Heights. Thank you again to Maya who said this, when I asked her at – one of the people who works in the school office in the school we visited – and I said, why have you worked all summer, you gave up your whole summer to get the school ready? And she looked at me calmly and she said, our families are worth it. And that's what we feel about all the families and children in New York City, and that's why we will be ready. Thank you so much, everybody.

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